

The Man From Home

A Novelization of the Play of the Same Name

By Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson

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(Continued from last week.)

"Pardon, m'sieu, the gentleman, he wish to speak to you."

Horace whirled in an angry flash. "What gentleman?" he demanded. And Pike regarded him calmly.

"I thought from your looks," he proceeded quietly, "you might be an American."

Horace planted himself squarely before his interrogator.

"Are you speaking to me?" he demanded haughtily.

"I shouldn't be surprised," said Pike gently. "Ain't you an American?"

"I happen to have been born in the States," replied Horace aggressively. And Pike smiled quizzically.

"Well, that was luck," he commented, and as Horace turned again to go he said: "Hold on a minute! I'm looking for some Americans here, and I expect you know 'em—boy and girl named Simpson?"

Horace flushed deeply to the roots of his hair.

"Is there any possibility you mean Granger-Simpson?" he asked, with elaborate sarcasm, but this was lost on Daniel.

"No, sir; just plain Simpson. Granger's their middle name. That's for old Jed Granger, grandfather on their mother's side. I want to see 'em both, but it's the girl I'm really looking for."

"Will you be good enough to state any possible reason why Miss Granger-Simpson should see you?" and Pike started in genuine astonishment.

"Reason?" he reiterated. "Why, yes, I'm her guardian!"

The effect of this simple statement was terrifying. Ethel reeled dizzily and was supported by Mme. de Champigny. The earl rose to his feet, and Horace staggered back.

"What?" he cried.

"Yes, sir," went on Pike—"Daniel Voorhees Pike, attorney at law, Kokomo, Ind."

Horace fell back from him in horrified amazement.

"I shall ask her," he began weakly and shamefacedly, "if she will consent to an interview."

Pike looked at him in amazement in his turn.

"Interview?" he said. "Why, I want to talk to her!"

Hawcastle, with some of his finer feelings aroused, picked up his sister-in-law with his eyes, much as a clever hostess picks up her feminine guests at dinner, and arose, turning to Ethel.

"This shall make no difference to us, my child," he said, and turning sharply, took Lady Creech by the arm and left the terrace. Pike looked at Horace pityingly.

"Don't you understand?" he said. "I'm her guardian!"

For a fleeting instant Horace stared at him and then dropped his chin and walked away.

"I shall never hold up my head again," he said.

The sudden horror of the revelation that Horace had drawn forth bore down upon Ethel's mind with a crushing weight.

To her artificialized understanding the disgrace was more than she could ever hope to bear, and Horace's expressed thought that he should never be able to hold up his head again was but a vivification of her own.

Surely it would have been bad enough, she told herself, if this fearful thing had come upon them privately, but to have it appear in the full light of day and in the very hearing of the family of the man she was about to marry was too cruel.

And with an inward groan she leaned for a moment against the terrace wall where the countess had left her. When the first astonishment had passed and she had time to realize what had occurred, events that had seemed but fleeting impressions rose up before her in all their vivid nakedness. Mme. de Champigny had looked at her with astute contempt, she was sure, and she dimly remembered seeing the look of horrified amazement upon the patrician features of the Earl of Hawcastle.

Then, with an awakened resentment, the fighting blood of the sturdy plebeian Simpson stock, the stock that had upheld its end in the battle against oppression in several wars, came back to her with a rush, and she decided to see this awful man and give him to understand that he must go away at once and never insult her again by his uncouth and vulgar presence. Such business as had to be transacted could be done through an intermediary.

With a bracing of her spirit she stepped forward resolutely and came up close behind Pike as he stood with drooping jaw, gazing in perplexity after the retreating Horace. Ethel cast a look of loathing upon the straight back of the guardian of her peace and ground her little boot heel into the stone flagging. She glanced up and saw that the common German was looking at Pike with grave sympathy and even understanding, and instantly she hated him for it. Then she saw him take his cap from the obsequious Mariano and turn away. When he had gone she said in a low voice:

"I am Miss Granger-Simpson."

CHAPTER X. THE HUMILIATION.

INSTANTLY Pike turned with a little twist of his lank body and half lifted his hand as if he expected a blow. Then his arm dropped again, and he stood looking at her in calm and interested fashion. As he stared his expression changed to one of mingled tenderness and pride, and when he spoke there was a world of pathos in his voice.

"Why," he said in a low, astonished tone—"why, I knew your pa from the time I was a little boy till he died, and I looked up to him more'n I ever looked up to anybody in my life, but I never thought he'd have a girl like you. He'd be mighty proud if he could see you now."

She turned from him in a smothered

rage and then faced him again with cold disapproval in her tone.

"Perhaps it will be as well if we avoid personal allusions," she said resentfully. This man should have no opportunity for bringing up those vulgar, half forgotten family reminiscences if she could help it. She smiled a trifle wily.

"I don't just see how that's possible," he answered, and she waved her hand indignantly.

"Will you please sit down?" she said, and Pike made an awkward bow.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied meekly, with the faintest accent on the last word, and obediently took the chair that Horace had vacated so precipitously. She shuddered at the word he had used and glanced nervously at the hat he was holding in his hands.

"Are—are you really my guardian?" she asked at last, with a trace of heat.



"We could have been spared this—this mortification."

ed unbelief in her tones. Pike smiled at her.

"Well," he said, "I've got the papers in my grip. I expect that."

"Oh, I know it!" she interrupted explosively. "It's only that we didn't fancy—we didn't expect!"

She paused, and he went on:

"I expect you thought I'd be considerably older."

"Not only that."

"And I guess you thought I'd neglected you a good deal." There was a touch of remorse in his tone, and he looked idly at the hat he held. "And it did look like it—never coming to see you—but I couldn't hardly manage the time to get away. You see, being trustee of your share of the estate I don't hardly have a fair show at my law practice. But when I got your letter eleven days ago I says to myself:

"Here, Daniel Voorhees Pike, you old shellback, you've just got to take time. John Simpson trusted you with his property, and he's done more—he's trusted you to look out for her, and now she's come to a kind of jumping off place in her life—she's thinking of getting married—so you just pack your gripsack and hike out over there and stand by her."

During the last half of his speech there was a tone of affectionate regard, at which she bridled resentfully.

"I quite fail to understand your point of view," she said frigidly. "Perhaps I had best make it clear to you that I am no longer thinking of getting married."

"Well, Lord 'a' mercy!" ejaculated Pike, leaning back in his chair and smiling at her, but she affected not to notice the lighter tone and went on:

"I mean I have decided upon it. The ceremony is to take place in a fortnight."

Pike brought the front feet of his chair down with a crash.

"Well, I declare!" he cried.

"We shall dispense with all delays," she went on, and Pike regarded her solemnly for a moment.

"Well, I don't know as I could say anything against that. He must be a mighty nice fellow, and you must think a heap of him." He sighed.

"That's the way it should be." He looked at her. "Ain't you happy?"

"Distinctly," said Ethel decisively.

Pike looked off over the blue bay, and then his gaze traveled to where Horace had been standing, and with a start he turned to her again, speaking eagerly:

"It ain't that fellow I was talking with, yonder?"

And she voiced an indignant protest.

"That was my brother!"

"Lord 'a' mercy!" ejaculated Daniel and then recovered himself. "But, then, I wouldn't remember him. He couldn't have been more than twelve when you was home last. Of course I'd 'a' known you!"

"How?" demanded Ethel. "You couldn't have seen me since I was a child."

"From your picture, though now I see it ain't so much like you," he answered, and she stepped forward, with astonishment.

"You have a photograph of me?"

"The last time I saw your father alive he gave it to me—to look at."

"And you remembered?"

"Yes, ma'am."

A look of incredulity passed over Ethel's face, and she replied:

"It does not strike me as possible. However, we will dismiss the subject."

"Well, if you'd like to introduce me to your—"

"To my brother?"

"No, ma'am; to your—to the young man."

"To Mr. St. Aubyn?" cried Ethel, recalling a step. "I think it quite unnecessary."

"I'm afraid I can't see it that way. I'll have to have a couple of talks with him, sort of look him over, so to

speak. I won't stay around here spilling your fun any longer than I can help—only just that and to get a letter I'm expecting from England."

Ethel bit her lip vexatiously.

"I do not see that you need have come at all. We could have been spared this—this mortification."

"You mean I mortify you? Why, I—I can't see how."

"In a hundred ways," she replied, "every way. That common person who is with you?"

"He isn't common. You only think so because he's with me," returned Daniel sadly, looking down.

"Who is he?" demanded Ethel sharply.

"He told me his name, but I can't remember it. I call him 'doc.'"

"It doesn't matter. What does matter is that you needn't have come. You could have written your consent."

"No, ma'am, not without seeing the young man," answered Pike resolutely.

"And you could have arranged the settlement in the same way," went on Ethel unheeding.

"Settlement! You seem to have settled it pretty well without me," returned Pike, smiling.

"You don't understand," said Ethel impatiently. "An alliance of this sort always entails certain settlement."

She paused, and he went on:

"If you were at all a man of the world I should not have to explain that that settlement, though I've some important business here. The police are chasing a badly convicted chap under the cliff yonder, so you'll have to excuse me. You know there's nothing like a little convict shooting to break the blooming monotony—what?"

He turned and rushed off down the

stairway. Pike turned to look after him in mute astonishment and then turned to Ethel. She refused to meet his glance, and the hot blood rose to her face as she felt his scrutiny.

She tapped nervously with her foot, and the astonishment grew in Daniel's face. He looked from her to where Almeric had disappeared and back to her again. Then he took a step forward as if to speak and stopped. Finally the dawning horror in his face took concrete form, and he spoke.

"That!" he groaned. "Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars for that! Say, how much do they charge for a real man over here anyway?"

But she was unable to meet his eye. Turning quickly, with her cheeks flaming with shame and anger, she rushed into the hotel and left him standing speechless on the spot.

CHAPTER XI. A CLASH OF WILLS.

IT required some minutes for Daniel Voorhees Pike to get over the amazement that possessed him when Ethel fled from him in such evident confusion.

His usually alert mind seemed incapable of concerted effort in the proper direction, and the dazed look on his face remained there until Mariano came to tell him that his rooms were ready and that Hecar von Grollenhagen was awaiting him. Then for the first time he awoke, and with a slight recognition as he realized the battle he had before him, he gave a curt order that the automobile, which had broken down on the road to the hotel, should be placed in the entrance garden, for he proposed to do some tinkering upon it.

"If that don't beat!" he muttered to himself and then allowed the remark to remain unfinished, for he could not imagine one thing that the incident could be supposed to have beaten. It stood alone in a little hollow square by itself and positively refused to surrender to any comparison whatsoever.

"And that—that—nine cent imitation of a man," he growled at last—"that vilification upon the—the—genus homo!" he finished, with a flash of

pride. Then he went off to his rooms and tried to adjust himself to the matter as he saw it and incidentally to bring some of that astute legal training gleaned from contact with farmers, promoters and other citizens to bear upon the case.

Horace in the meanwhile had walked along the cliff, wrestling with the situation as it appeared to him. There was not the faintest doubt in his mind that the noble earl would break off the match because of the humiliation his equally noble family had been subjected to by the incursion of this vulgar guardian.

Hot and tired, he returned to the hotel with some of his anguish worked off and sought his sister. She, however, was locked up in her own room and would only insist that he go away. So it was from Lady Creech at last that he gleaned some inkling of what had occurred.

It was nearly 6 o'clock when he made up his mind to search out Pike and "have it out with the beggar," as he put it, and he found the obstacle in the entrance garden. As Horace came upon the scene Pike was pounding cheerfully with a hammer upon a bolt-head of the motor car.

He was in his shirt sleeves and wore a long workman's smock close buttoned at the neck. From between his teeth came the unfamiliar strains of "The Blue and the Gray." With a revulsion of feeling Horace approached him.

"Mr. Pike!" he said politely.

"One lies down at Appomattox," went on the song, and Horace stamped impatiently upon the turf.

"Mr. Pike! Mr. Pike! I wish a word with you!" Horace went on, quite

angrily. Pike looked up mildly and regarded Horace with interest.

"Eh?" he said, and moved to the other side of the machine, rubbing his lean chin with the handle of a monkey wrench.

"I wished to say that the surprise of this morning so upset me that I went for a long walk. I have just returned," said Horace.

He waited expectantly, but Mr. Pike went on abstractedly. "One wears clothes of gray," and seemed to be absorbed in his work, so that Horace was forced to go on.

"I have been even more upset by what I have just learned."

"Why, that's too bad," answered Pike, fishing for a nut in the bottom of the tonneau.

"It is too bad—absolutely monstrous!" said Lady Creech tells me that my sister did you the honor to present you to the family with which we are forming an alliance—at least to a portion of it."

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Pike straightened up a trifle.

"Your sister kind of hinted in her letter that you think a good deal of this French lady—the widow. I suppose you have made up your mind to take her for richer or poorer, eh? Now, what's she going to give you?"

Horace stopped short in horrified amazement.

"Why, I thought you'd charge her something—just a little. Ain't that the way over here?"

"It seems impossible for you to understand our motives in trying to lift ourselves above the common herd. You are trying to interfere between us and the fine flower of Europe," went on Horace excitedly.

Pike straightened up and looked him in the eye quizzically.

"I never heard none of the folks around Kokomo speak of your pa as a 'fine flower,' but we thought a heap of him, and when he married your ma he was glad to get her, and I never heard that he asked for any settlement. When she took him he was a poor man, but if he'd had \$750,000 I'd bet he'd 'a' given it for her."

In the back lot and give him a thrashing he won't forget to the day of his death!"

She was about to answer when from a distance came the roll of drums and then the sound of a bugle. The sounds came from afar off, as if below the cliff.

They both stopped to listen. Then the servants came running, with Mariano at their head. They rushed to the wall and leaned over, all excitement. Mariano turned to call to them over his shoulder:

"The bandit of Russia! The soldiers think he is hidden in a grotto under these cliffs!"

As he spoke Almeric ran down the steps with a shotgun in his hand and made for the steps leading down the face of the cliff. Pike turned to Ethel.

"I saw that fellow on the road here. What's he meant for?"

Ethel turned angrily from the lawyer and called sharply to her fiancé:

"Almeric!"

Almeric stared at Pike through his monocle and laughed.

"Why, it's the donkey man, isn't it? How very odd! You'll have to see the governor and our solicitor about that settlement, though. I've some important business here. The police are chasing a badly convicted chap under the cliff yonder, so you'll have to excuse me. You know there's nothing like a little convict shooting to break the blooming monotony—what?"

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